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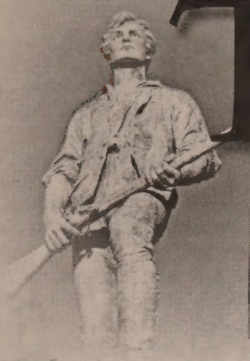


The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Career advice
Last held two years ago, Career Day is back to help LHS students learn what jobs can lie in their future.
[turn to page 3]

Winterfest
An annual collaboration of actors, directors and writers, all LHS students with a passion for theater.
[turn to page 5]

Volume LIII Issue IV—March 2012

Lasa to replace Cohen as principal next year

■ Jonah Bader
Abby Heingartner
Editors-in-Chief

After a long career in education and four years at LHS, Natalie Cohen announced that she would retire from her position as principal at the end of this year.

Paul Ash, superintendent of the Lexington Public Schools, named Associate Principal Laura Lasa as the next principal of LHS.

Cohen made the announcement in early January, expressing "great ambivalence" about the decision.

"It is a very difficult decision to have made," Cohen said. "I love it here, but I feel strongly that there are other things that I've always promised that I would do."

Cohen's decision to retire did not take Ash by surprise, but rather he recalled why he chose Cohen four years ago.

"I specifically hired her for her intellect, her knowledge of what an outstanding education looks like in a school and also her incredibly strong human-relations skills," Ash said. "She did a wonderful job."

Reflecting on her time at LHS, Cohen takes particular pride in the progress the school has made in helping students.

"We've worked really hard on creating respect and calm," she said. "[We have worked on] lowering the stress level … [and] enforcement of policies, like the homework policy, like the testing policy, making that more reasonable for students, encouraging students to self-advocate a lot more."

Gregory Muir, a senior and moderator of the Student-Faculty Senate, cited Cohen's attention to students' needs as one of her main strengths.

"Putting the students first is something that she's always focused on, and reducing stress," he said.

He also noted the work that Cohen has done to revise the finals policy.

Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Laura Lasa and Natalie Cohen have worked side-by-side for four years; next year, Lasa will take over as principal of LHS.

"She came forward with something, but then decided to let the faculty have their say … and I think that was wonderful for her to do," he added. "It was really nice to have her at LHS … and I wish she could have stayed longer."

Noah Coolidge, a senior and the student representative on the School Committee, said, "She's got a very clear vision for the school, and that's been very helpful."

Teachers also had positive feedback about Cohen. Jim Williams, a math teacher, called Cohen "the finest principal I ever worked for in 25 years."

As a large and diverse high school, LHS has [PRINCIPAL, page 3]

MBTA debates closure of bus routes

■ Anish Kanesa-Thasan
Staff Writer

The Massachusetts' Bay Transportation Authority has announced that it might be closing several of its bus routes and restricting service for others in an effort to combat its budget deficit.

A study conducted for the MBTA, titled "Potential MBTA Fare Increase and Service Reductions: Impact Analysis," proposed two possible solutions. The debate centers around these two separate plans of action.

According to the impact analysis, the first plan would end service on 60 bus routes and implement fare hikes by about 43.5 percent. Under the second plan, more than 200 bus routes would be eliminated, in addition to a reduction in service on 11 other routes and an approximate fare hike of 35 percent. The 62 and 76 routes, those that connect Lexington to Cambridge and Boston, are among those facing possible elimination.

The MBTA Advisory Board recently announced a third option, which would institute a smaller fare increase and a reorganization of Massachusetts public transportation.

As users of the MBTA's services, some students are concerned about the effects of reduced or more expensive public transportation.

Tim Zhu, a senior who is a regular MBTA rider, said he "[sees] a lot of Lexington residents who also depend on the MBTA," and believes that if the MBTA cuts the 62 and 76 routes, commuters could be impacted.

Elijah Ada, a junior, agreed. "Getting rid of [the Lexington routes] would have a detrimental effect on those who need [them]."

However, Ada is torn over the issue. "I feel that jacking up the prices would result in angry letters and a decrease in people who commute using the MBTA," he said, "[yet] cutting routes is not practical either."

Zhu offers an alternative. If he were in charge, he would "reduce the frequency of the buses to cut down the labor costs," while increasing commuter fares only minimally and avoid having to cut any routes.

Zhu's comments underscore the important role of MBTA routes in the commute of many residents. The elimination of bus routes could inhibit those who have relied on public transportation in the past.

LHS cafeteria grease trap holds potential for biofuel

■ Zoe Wood
News Editor

At a recent meeting of the Food Club, members encountered a previously little-known aspect of the LHS cafeteria — the grease trap. Although club members expressed disgust over its smell, the trap is actually relatively small and low-maintenance.

In fact, it turns out that the cafeteria's leftover grease goes on quite a journey after leaving LHS.

The cafeteria grease trap is a 2-by-3-foot metal grate in the ground that is cleaned about twice a year. Kellie Prince, the director of food and nutrition services for the district, suggested that the six-inch deep hole in the floor needed very little maintenance.

According to Gerard Cody, the director of Lexington's Board of Health, a company named John's Sewer maintains the LHS grease trap. Grease moves through the sink and into the trap, where it collects until it is scooped out into 5 gallon buckets or removed with a wet vac.

After the grease is removed, it is sent to Northeast Environmental Processing, in Lawrence, Mass.

"Northeast Environmental Processing specializes in recycling and reprocessing brown food grease," said Cody. "First, they separate the solids from the water. The water is then processed through their water treat- [GREASE TRAP, page 7]

Lexington High School should offer philosophy

■ Noah Star
Opinion Editor

The celebrated television series "Lost" popularized the names Locke, Hume and Rousseau. However, most watchers are more interested in discerning the mystery behind the island than discovering humanity's reason for existence.

In a modern world where any question can be answered at one's fingertips, philosophy has taken second fiddle. But philosophical questions remain unanswered, as even Internet search engines have their limits.

The term philosophy, defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, esp. when considered as an academic discipline," is rightfully broad. As an academic subject, philosophy provides the intellectual foundation for all other forms of study.

Historical analysis, literary theme, mathematical theorem and scientific hypothesis all originate from some philosophical foundation, as progress is only made when humanity pushes intellectual boundaries. Thus, philosophy plays an essential role in the education of any high school student as encouragement to question and look for answers.

The pedagogical importance of philosophy is not totally lost in the classroom. History classes are known for exploring their courses' philosophical depths, as in U.S. history's study of political philosophy when discussing the American Revolution.

AP European History studies the ideological underpinnings of European political and social trends in each unit. Instead of shying away from the oftentimes dense and confusing material of analytic or continental philosophers, these courses embrace the challenge.

The same exploration occurs in many other classrooms throughout LHS, and, for that, curriculum planners deserve accolade. Both students and teachers may be hesitant to engage in complex readings, but the push is worthwhile. Overall, the school does an excellent job meeting the intrinsic curiosity of humanity.

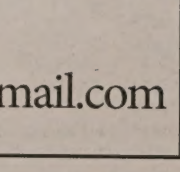
Yet a criticism still remains. The aforementioned courses all study the intersection of philosophy and the respective course material. After the removal of the course Political Thought, there is no longer a class devoted solely to philosophical study.

More attention should be given to subject matter that is so universal and wide-reaching. Any person who experiences the human condition can provide unique insight and interpretation for discussion. There exists a world beyond the easy answer, a road less-traveled that awaits invested and interested students.

For now, students can get a taste of philosophy in a variety of social science and language classes. But once the quest for the impossible answer begins, it is unstoppable and LHS should remain ahead of the game.

Bring back Political Thought and create new similar courses. If student interest is lacking, the school should advertise and advocate the course's merits. With sufficient persuasion, students will forgo their inhibitions and step into the vast intellectual landscape that is philosophy.

Questions?
Comments?
Let's hear it.



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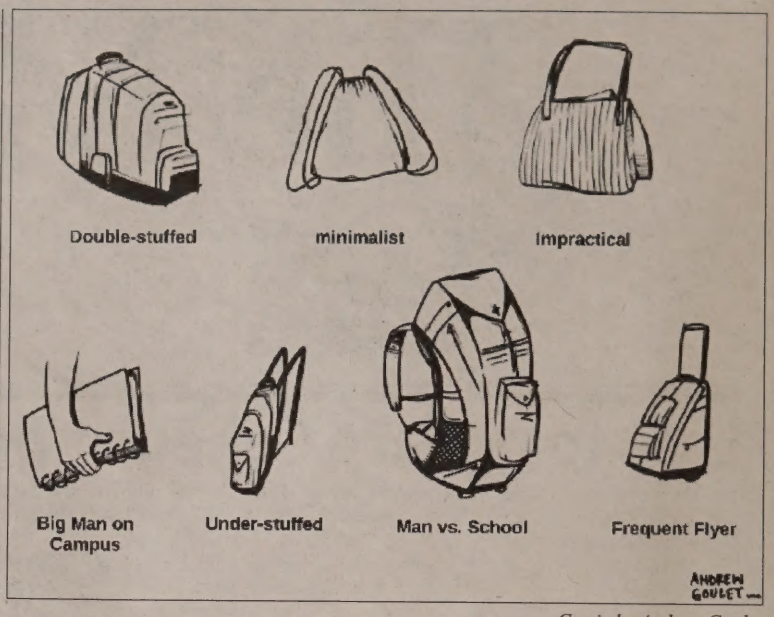


Comic by Andrew Goulet

District food policy unnecessarily restrictive

■ Hannah Kwon
Staff Writer
Noah Star
Opinion Editor

The once habitual munching and crunching seen throughout many LHS classrooms has been curtailed. A new elucidation on the district-wide food policy has forced teachers to be hypervigilant regarding what food, if any, is allowed in the classroom.

As many students have learned from their teachers, this policy allows students to eat in class as long as they bring their own food and it is nut-free. Also, students are not allowed to share food with their peers, and teachers cannot hold class parties or events involving food in school.

But the extremity of this rule comes into question. Food serves as a beneficial ingredient for educational purposes. Not only does it keep students energized during over-demanding and stressful days, but it also has curricular benefit.

For instance, language teachers have to jump through bureaucratic hoops to gain permission for the use of food in the classroom. Thus, teachers effectively lose the ability to allow students to bring dishes to share in class, which is harmful to language and culture classes as students miss the memorable experience of truly getting in touch with world cultures.

Moreover, if students are only allowed to bring in their own food, and class parties are not permitted, Lexington High School is restricting its students and repressing some of the enjoyable, non-educational aspects of school.

"I don't agree with the food policy, because teachers want to have class parties all the time, and they're obviously not going to have people bring in food that others are allergic to," said Sophia Hancock, a sophomore. "There are projects involving food, too, and those are really fun."

Furthermore, this new enforcement of the food policy may lead to more confusion and disarray.

Situations will occur where some students might refuse to abide by the rule at times, and they might secretly distribute food among their friends. If a teacher finds out, it will become a hassle to determine whose food belongs to whom, and which student brought which type of food.

Instead, it is simply enough to be aware of which class members have allergies and keep that in mind while sharing food and holding educational activities in class that involve eating.

However, proponents of the food policy maintain that no chances ought to be taken. There is an elevated risk, they argue, of a student having an allergic reaction to a specific food that a classmate may distribute during class.

But haven't the students at LHS progressed beyond elementary school? High school students are responsible enough to take care of their own health. Those students who must unfortunately live with food allergies in their daily lives already know what foods to avoid.

And what is the point of not allowing food with nuts? A student can eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in the cafeteria, but not in a classroom? Food-related allergies can occur no matter the location, and banning nuts won't solve anything.

"Nowadays, kids are eating literally everywhere around school, and that's no difference than eating in class," said Lisa Lee, a junior.

In addition, food nourishes students as they face the tiring obstacles of daily school life and helps them to concentrate better.

The experience of sharing food with others (as long as they have no allergies) is enjoyable, so having this privilege taken away diminishes social communication between kids, which is contrary to the goals of LHS.

Instead of promoting these new rules, LHS should not continue with this policy, but rather petition the School Committee for a change. It puts too many limitations on students' freedom in class and only appears to represent a hasty, out-of-touch reaction to eliminate the chances of another student suffering a life-threatening food allergy during class.

Teachers and students ought to be on high alert during class whenever food-related activities take place and be aware of those with allergies. However, by restricting privileges regarding food, the district-wide policy imposes an unreasonable and unnecessary requirement on students and teachers.

PRINCIPAL - PAGE 1

resources and information as you can and try to make … the best decisions," she said. "There are always going to be people who are disappointed that you didn't decide another way."

Despite the difficulties of the job, she has cherished her time at LHS.

"I'm delighted every day by the caliber and the heights to which people go here, in so many different ways," she said. "The people here, especially the students and the teachers, have made this an experience like no other."

In her letter to the community announcing her retirement, Cohen called the past four years "the pinnacle of [her] career."

Although many expected a wider search to be conducted, Ash selected Lasa because he believed LHS "would tremendously benefit by hiring a person who deeply understands Lexington and brings stability to the school."

"[Lasa] and I," Ash continued, "are in complete agreement about the state of the high school and the vision for the high school."

Ash said his announcement to the staff that he had picked Lasa to replace Cohen was met with "a huge eruption of applause."

Cohen herself voiced complete support for Lasa.

"I think the world of her as an educational leader," she said. "Her investment in the success of Lexington High School is unlike anyone else's … I think that students and the faculty and the community of Lexington will benefit greatly from her in that role."

Coolidge supports Ash's choice and believes that Lasa's promotion to principal is "a very good decision."

Coolidge believes that Lasa will be an effective principal because of her familiarity with LHS, adding, "She'll be more able to get right in and jump into the role."

Muir agrees. "I have so much confidence in her," he said. "It's nice to see someone from LHS because she knows how the school runs … [and] she really knows what she's doing."

Lasa's appointment to LHS' top position represents the culmination of a lifetime spent in the Lexington school system.

She grew up in Lexington and attended Lexington public schools. After college, she returned to teach at Bowman Elementary School and then Clarke Middle School. She became a physical education teacher at LHS, a job she held for almost 20 years until becoming a dean in 2001.

Until 2001, she also coached basketball and softball as well as field hockey in earlier years. Lasa was a dean until 2008, when she became the associate principal.

On her journey through the Lexington schools, she said, "It's a trip going from kindergarten to principal. That's pretty cool. It's pretty wild."

Lasa said that it will be hard to follow Cohen.

"Hard because [Cohen] is so personable, and warm, and she's brought such joy and happiness and clarity to a lot of things," Lasa said.

She does not plan to institute any radical changes.

"I think Ms. Cohen and I have done so many things in tandem, in many ways, that I think it's not going to be a culture shock for people," she said. "It's going to be kind of 'that's the way it's been.'"

A primary goal for Lasa is to preserve the many positive aspects of LHS.

"Don't fix what isn't broken," she said, explaining her philosophy. "There's more things that go right … here, so leave them alone. But do a better job celebrating them."

Promoting balance and reducing stress are two other top priorities.

"This place is a pressure cooker, and it's building, for me, out of control in some places, and we've got to get the temperature back down," she said. "We can still be high-achieving, high-performing and not have to be at all costs."

Other areas where Lasa plans to focus her efforts are transparency about decision-making, working to combine academics with civics, and uniting the school. She also hopes to encourage people at all levels — students, faculty, administrators and community members — to have more "direct and honest conversations without placing blame."

"I'm really excited about carrying on what's going well here, and it sounds trite, but living up to the magnitude and the honor of the job," Lasa said.

Because the principal is responsible for hiring, Lasa will hire her replacement for the role of associate principal. She hopes to "put the process into place" around March, and she plans to make a decision by the end of the year.

Anubhav Jain and Zoe Wood contributed reporting.

Both high schoolers and middle schoolers benefit from town-wide tutoring program

■ **Justin Kim**
Staff Writer

Every week, Lexington High School students in the National Honor Society go to Clarke and Diamond middle schools to help students with their homework.

At these tutoring sessions, high schoolers help middle schoolers by answering their questions and helping hem get organized.

There are many reasons why students choose to participate in this activity. First, students can acquire community service hours that are required for graduation. Moreover, volunteers say they look forward to the rewarding experience and satisfaction that come from working with children.

"I've always enjoyed working with kids and figured middle school students could use help understanding and finishing their homework," said Stephanie Wilson, a junior who tutors at Diamond.

These student tutors feel that many benefits can result from this project. Middle school students receive extra help on their homework, earn better grades and make new friends in the process.

"It's important that high school students reach out to middle school students," said Emma Hede-Brierley, who is president of NHS. "We need to play an active part in the community, and high school students can share their knowledge to ease the transition to high school."

Tutors also benefit from volunteering.

"I feel glad to have helped a kid learn and feel more confident with doing their homework by themselves," Wilson said. "I believe the kids really appreciate what we have to offer, and they look up to the high school students."

Helping students comes with one caveat that sometimes makes it harder to achieve the main goal of the project.

"Many of [the students] have difficulty focusing because a lot of their friends are there," said Colleen Hughes, a senior, who volunteers at Clarke. "It can be hard to keep a bunch of 12-year-olds focused on their homework as opposed to talking with their friends."

To meet the goals of the program as effectively as possible, the project needs more volunteers to help.

According to Hughes, there is an average of five people to tutor the 20 to 30 middle school students who attend each week. The shortage of tutors sometimes makes it more difficult to help students with their homework. However, tutors feel that it is still worthwhile to partici-

[TUTORING, page 7]

Career Day helps students think about future

■ **Arman Bilge**
Photo Editor

On Jan. 31 and Feb. 2, adults from the Greater Boston area came to Lexington High School to participate in Career Day, an event organized by the guidance department.

Speakers from a variety of careers came to discuss their jobs, answer questions, and inform students about their respective fields.

The purpose of Career Day was to expose sophomores to future opportunities as well as to encourage students to think about potential careers as they make their course selections.

David Herrera, a sophomore, said that what he learned from Career Day is that finding the right job is a process.

"I saw that it's all right to change jobs many times, and that it's most important to find something that you enjoy," he said.

An event like Career Day is particularly relevant to sophomores because it ties in with the guidance seminar curriculum.

Cynthia Tang, one of the guidance counselors who planned and organized Career Day, explained its significance to choosing courses throughout high school.

Staff photo by Arman Bilge

A sophomore English class listens as Career Day speakers describe their job-related experiences.

"Sophomore seminars emphasize choosing courses that set you on track towards a field of interest to you," said Tang.

This year, however, Career Day was expanded to reach out to the upperclassmen. As part of a new component of the event, students could participate in a meet-and-greet session and chat informally with the speakers in the Library Media Center during a free block.

"With their college applications complete, we wanted to give seniors an opportunity to reflect on career options," Tang said.

Current juniors did not have a Career Day as sophomores last year, so the sessions provided them with a similar experience.

The class of 2012 did have a Career Day when they were sophomores. Although many seniors have a recollection of their Career Day experiences, Andrew Swanson and Joshua Yoskowitz, both seniors, were unable to recall the event as sophomores.

Organizing Career Day was a multifaceted process. The speakers were volunteers who represented a wide variety of careers, all from the Greater Boston community. Presentations involving an assortment of different speakers were scheduled.

Among the changes from Career Day 2010 was sending a panel of speakers to English classrooms.

"We wanted to avoid the confusion that arises from sending speakers between buildings or directing stu-

[CAREER, page 7]

Commentary from China: Celebrating the New Year

■ Maria Ivanenko
Columnist

Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, took place this year on Jan. 23, and it was definitely a perspective-changing experience. My host family traveled to Zhuzhou, a nearby city, to live in my uncle's house for a week, along with two other related families and one set of grandparents. It almost felt like any other week, although there were some clear differences.

Family is the most important aspect of the New Year. Many people (especially migrant workers) spend many hours traveling by train to get back home in time to celebrate. Train tickets are sold out for the five days before and after New Year, and people have to buy standing spots for especially-full trains.

The family bonding time continues for about a week after New Year. During this week, it is important to visit the eldest member of the family. For my family, that was my host father's mother's brother's wife, otherwise known as my dad's jiuma. We brought her presents and ate lunch with her and about six other families. So many people came to see jiuma that my host sister didn't even know most of them.

Like our televised New Year countdown in America, a major national New Year celebration is broadcast on CCTV in China. Many famous stars take part in this massive show, with performances ranging from comedy to dancing and singing.

For me, the show itself was eye-opening. Many of the performances were culture-oriented and featured ethnic minorities in the country that are distinct from the majority Han Chinese. For example, I learned a lot about the Mongolian minority from a skit that was about their unique lifestyle.

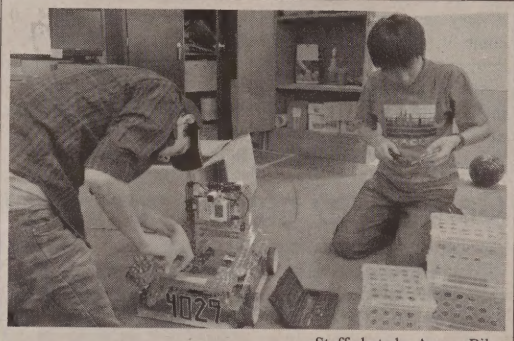
Food is also very important on this holiday. In earlier years, when China's standard of living was relatively low, most people would eat meat, chicken and fish only on New

[CHINA, page 6]

★ ★ LHS AND THE OSCARS ★ ★

The Musket editorial board and film teacher Nathan Johnson analyzed the nominees to decide what movies they believed should win. See how their predictions compared to the real winners.

Category	Musket Editors	Nathan Johnson	Actual Winners
Best Picture	The Tree of Life	The Artist	The Artist
Actor in a Leading Role	Jean Dujardin	Jean Dujardin	Jean Dujardin
Actress in a Leading Role	Rooney Mara	Viola Davis	Meryl Streep
Actor in a Supporting Role	Christopher Plummer	Christopher Plummer	Christopher Plummer
Actress in a Supporting Role	Octavia Spencer	Octavia Spencer	Octavia Spencer



Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Team captain Derek Leung, a senior, and member SungWoo Cho, a freshman, work on assembling their robot.

Robotics team goes to States

■ Grace Ma
Staff Writer

Robots may sound like the technology of the future, but in Lexington High School's award-winning robotics team, Two Bits and a Byte, students are already programming functional robots on their own.

The team is doing so with success, too -- they qualified for the state championship of the FIRST Tech Challenge, which takes place in March.

Leading the team are captains Benjamin Tidor, Carolyn Chang and Derek Leung, all seniors, and Garrett Parrish, a junior. The team currently has more than 20 members and meets in Room 703 every Tuesday and Thursday.

Two Bits and a Byte is not the typical LHS science team. Parrish said that the team focuses on cooperation rather than competition, and that it is "a group of caring students all working collaboratively to accomplish a goal."

Dan Schlosser, a senior on the team, agreed.

"One group will work on programming the robot, another will build a new arm for the robot and others will practice driving the robot," he said. "Everyone there is working towards the same goals, and it's not super competitive like the rest of the high school."

During a typical meeting, members split into groups to tackle individual tasks while the captains organize plans to ensure the team's efficiency and productivity.

New members are often paired with veterans in order to "shadow" and learn from them when working on projects.

"For example, I help one particular freshman a lot, give him specific mechanisms to build and help him think creatively," said Parrish.

One of the challenges the team has to deal with is its large size.

"We have a lot of people who are all excited to work, and sometimes we are overstaffed," Schlosser said. "Fortunately, we have great organization this year, and we have been successful in staying or-

[ROBOTS, page 6]

Teachers, students find blogs and Twitter useful in school

■ Jackie Kong
Staff Writer

Tweeting and blogging are not just activities reserved for tech-savvy adults anymore. Now, people of all ages are flooding the Internet with snippets of their daily lives.

The effects of the recent tweeting and blogging trend can be seen especially at Lexington High School. Teachers have begun using blogging platforms in school, to update students with assignments, as well as outside of school to share their personal lives and work. Students are using Twitter and other forms of blogging to connect with friends and express themselves.

The micro-blogging platform Tumblr has more than 41 million unique blogs to date, while the Twitter community is growing on a daily basis, with more than 200 million accounts currently.

With a plethora of users ranging from A-list celebrities to middle school students, the appeal of blogging platforms has swept the world. The brevity of Twitter along with the ease of publishing customized posts on blogging platforms such as WordPress, Blogger and Tumblr have attracted many users.

At LHS, teachers and students alike have taken advantage of the freedom and efficiency of expression that Twitter and blogging have to offer.

Rachel Mitton, a U.S. history teacher and debate coach, joined Twitter earlier this year and uses it in a classroom setting for the benefit of her students' learning.

"I made my Twitter account in the beginning of the year, and I'm trying to use it more often now," said Mitton. "I use it to update students on announcements, such as if class is being held at the library, as well as reminders about homework."

For Mitton, the benefits of using Twitter revolve around its simplicity in format and its accessibility to information.

"I like using Twitter because it's simple and straightforward, and... [it] is a quick and interesting way to get information and news," she said. "When Osama bin Laden died, I first found out through Twitter."

Isabel Ljungberg, a junior, agrees with Mitton that Twitter can positively impact students, but she also notes its potential misuse among teens.

"I think Twitter can have a lot of use as a creative outlet or to communicate within friends," she said. "However, it's hard to ignore the way some people abuse others and bully online. Twitter is attractive, to me, because it helps [me] stay in touch with friends as well as glimpse into the lives of celebrities, but I think it's important to limit followers to trustworthy people to avoid the harshness of cyberbullying."

A teacher who supports blogging is Cara Bean, an art teacher. She keeps two blogs, one for educational purposes and one for her personal work.

[BLOGS, page 7]

Annual drama festival produced by students

■ Emily Hu
Eugenia Kim
Staff Writers

For more than 20 years, Lexington High School students have participated in Winterfest, showcasing their talents through short one-act performances. Student thespians and playwrights built on that tradition this year.

All shows were presented by the LHS Drama Club and run by students, with weeks of hard work beginning in December in preparation for the drama festival, which opened on Feb. 2. Shown on three consecutive nights, students' performances ranged from comedy to drama.

Past years have seen certain controversial or provocative plays such as "The Cake Abortion" and "The Forbidden Fruit."

Presented in the Gillespie Auditorium and the Black Box, plays ranged from 10 to 30 minutes. The LHS Improv Troupe concluded the final show on Saturday night.

Translating students' ideas into coherent plays is often difficult. Students seek to create plays that are thought-provoking or comical, but ultimately they want to see the audience react. This year, participants in Winterfest said that the audience was positive and cooperative, laughing with jokes at the right time.

Some audience members showed further interest by staying after to discuss the plays with the respective writers and directors.

The biggest highlight, said drama teacher Sandra DiMartino, is that students are able to bring to life the pieces they have written and created themselves.

> "...everyone feels a sense of accomplishment from putting on or being part of a play."
> Rebecca Weiser, junior

Verena Lucke, a junior and one of the Drama Club student leaders who helped organize the event, agreed.

"The time and effort people have put into writing, casting, and rehearsing is immense, and getting to see it all come together over the course of three nights is the best part about it," said Lucke.

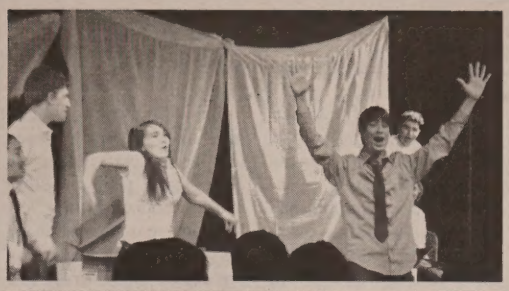
This year, most students wrote their own original plays, or in some cases took them from Emerson Fest, another festival affiliated with the drama department. Each year, students direct their own plays, cast the actors themselves and schedule rehearsal times with DiMartino.

"I think the best part of Winterfest is that everything is student-run, so everyone feels a sense of accomplishment from putting on or being part of a play," said Rebecca Weiser, a junior who acted in the play "Apples", written and directed by Leah Leshchinsky.

Despite all of the work that is entailed, Winterfest is also a social opportunity.

"It was great working so closely with my friends. To be directed by and acting with people I was so close with was really rewarding. Also, seeing Tim's face after the show and knowing that he was happy with the job we did with his play, it was an incredible feeling," said Michal Clayton, a junior who acted in the play "A Bitter Sweetheart," which was written and directed by Tim Childs.

Another benefit of Winterfest is that students who might not otherwise get involved have the chance to do so. Being student-run, students work around one another's schedules and become more efficient with scheduling practices. DiMartino noted that Winterfest's flexible nature allows more people to participate.



Staff photos by Alice Ren

(Top) Winterfest opens on Feb. 3 with an act by Joshua Rourke, a sophomore, Patrick Neal and Giustina Sacco, juniors, and Ching-Ching Shiue and Daniel Laikhter, seniors.
(Middle) Meaghan Gallagher-Stack, a sophomore, performs in "Slam Punk," written and directed by sophomores Emily Edelstein and Maya Strod.
(Bottom) In "Closed Case," produced by Giustina Sacco and Aaron Prager, juniors, Robert Conn, played by Patrick Neal, a junior, chats with Betty Hall, played by Giustina Sacco.

collegebored

Second semester: visiting, waiting

■ Ben Edelstein
Columnist

The applications are in. The interviews are done. The college application process is finally over. Now, the waiting game begins.

But compared with the grueling months of applications, a short period of waiting is welcome. We are now second-semester seniors. High school is not quite over, but after working hard for the past few years, we certainly deserve some relaxation.

Last month, I received exciting news: I was accepted to college through early decision. I was elated, and I hope that all of my peers will have the same experience next month when regular decisions come out. After all, with so many great schools to choose from, most people eventually end up someplace where they are happy.

For some juniors and many seniors, what now begins is probably the most fun part of the college process: visiting schools.

I have been on a few college visits, and they were all quite enjoyable. They typically involve a few parts:

First, my parents and I would sit in an auditorium with a large group of prospective students and their parents. Before the presentation began, we would all introduce ourselves and say where we were from.

Next, an administrator from the college, usually the dean or assistant dean of admissions would give a presenta-

[COLLEGE, page 7]

During school vacations, Lexington youth groups take service trips to help the needy

■ Alice Ren
Julia Sun
Staff Writers

During school vacations, many students spend their time sleeping in and hanging out with friends. But for the students involved in a number of local church youth groups, a break from school doesn't mean a break from work.

Members of the Hancock, First Parish and Follen youth groups spend school vacations helping people in need in Kentucky, West Virginia and Louisiana, respectively.

Each trip gives participants a chance to connect with each other and with people from another area of the country. The experience teaches students about the power they have to make a positive impact in others' lives.

The Hancock Youth Group from Hancock United Church of Christ makes an annual trip to Neon, Ky., during February or April break. The city, once home to a booming coal-mining industry, has fallen on hard times because of the recent economic downturn.

HYG partners with Jamboree Housing to build and repair houses for people in need in the area.

"[Jamboree] provide[s] almost everything for us, from living quarters to on-site managers, while we reimburse them with our labor and a monetary donation," wrote Chandler Gregg, a senior and co-president of HYG, in an email.

During the trip, "[we] send different people off to different house sites," said Chris Appelman, also a senior and co-president of the group. "We help with the construction of houses -- framing, foundations, demolition, painting." The group members wake up at 6 a.m. every day and work the entire day for five days before returning to Lexington.

The trip has a lasting impact on the youth group's members.

"We not only get connected with the community [in Kentucky], but we also feel connected to each other," Appelman said. "We understand [that] we are pretty privileged."

The youth group from First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church visited West Virginia last spring and spent time fixing the houses of people living in extreme poverty.

"Normally when you think of [a] service trip you think of somewhere that underwent a natural disaster such as Haiti or New Orleans, so we were shocked when we heard our destination was West Virginia," wrote Elise Goplerud, a senior and member of the First Parish youth group, in an email. "We never really thought that there were peo-

[YOUTH, page 7]

ROBOTS - PAGE 4

ganized."

Patience is necessary when constructing robots. "It's a long process," said Dena Guo, a senior on the team. "You have to keep on changing and adapting mechanisms."

In the fall, the team's hard work paid dividends at the regional qualifier of the FIRST Tech Challenge in North Andover, in which 20 teams around the region designed and built robots to accomplish certain goals.

"The challenge that FTC creates is truly difficult. One person couldn't imagine doing it [alone] in the time required," Parrish said. "We build our robot from the ground up, turning a pile of metal pieces into this mechatronic device that moves across with speed and agility."

Overall, the team placed first in the qualification matches and won the Inspire award. According to the FTC website, this honor "is given to the team that truly embodied the 'challenge' of the FTC program." The LHS team earned the privilege of competing at the state level in March, for which Parrish has high hopes.

"I think that all the aspects of our team have the potential to create an extremely prepared team for the state competition," he said.

Despite the team's progress, it will be facing even more difficult tasks ahead in the state championship.

"One part of the challenge where the most points can be scored is crate-raising," said Parrish.

"We are now designing a mechanism that can lift multiple crates five feet above the ground."

For Schlosser, his experience on the team has been fun and enriching. "While I have been interested in computer science and engineering for a long time, being [a member of] Two Bits and a Byte has served to encourage my passion," he said.

For those interested in joining the team, new members need only have a strong interest in robotics.

"You don't need to be a math or science nerd, or be a computer fanatic," said Schlosser.

CHINA - PAGE 4

Year because they could not afford to eat these foods everyday.

Although today's standard of living has greatly improved and meat, chicken and fish are daily staples, people continue to eat such foods on New Year according to tradition. Among a variety of snacks, a type of homemade candy serves as a special treat for New Year.

Unlike many portrayals of Chinese New Year, I was surprised to learn that there are usually no dragon or lion dances in the big cities like the ones you see in movies or in Chinatown. But many other stereotypes were present: the red lanterns, red envelopes with red 100 yuan bills (about $16), and signs hanging on doors wishing luck for the household.

One of my favorite parts of experiencing Chinese New Year was seeing the fireworks that are lit up everywhere. From early in the morning to late at night, I could constantly hear loud bangs and booms coming from the streets and then smell smoke coming from the firecrackers and see the fireworks creating pictures in the sky.

Overall, it was nice to experience the Spring Festival for myself as the Chinese do, instead of thinking of it as the stereotyped Hollywood version. With that in mind, I wish everyone a happy Year of the Dragon!

SKATING - PAGE 8

goal of achieving and working together," said Maisie Meade, a junior and a Lexette, "and I like that we go through the ups and the downs together … so we always have those people to rely on and they're like family."

The social aspect is only one of the benefits of the Hayden synchronized skating teams.

Amelie Crowe, a sophomore and an Ice Mate, expressed her love of skating in an email.

"[T]he feeling of flying and defying gravity … traveling to new places … and taking the life lessons I learn on the ice … with me wherever I go," she wrote, are some of the reasons why skating is so important to her.

March is a busy month -- take a break and do some puzzles!

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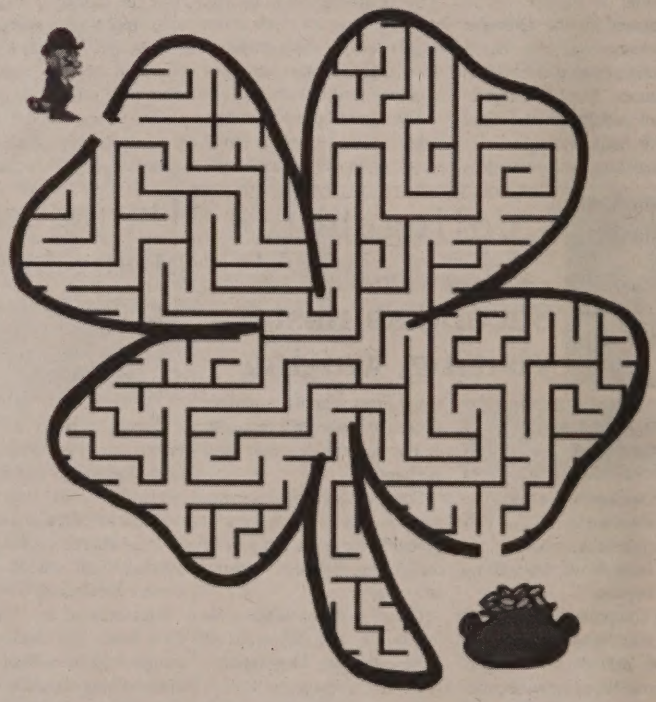
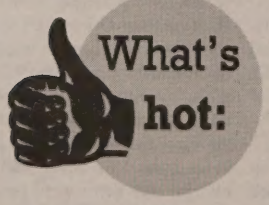
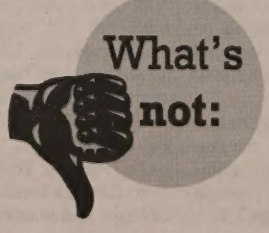




- Early spring
- Presidential primary season
- Start of Daylight Savings Time, longer days



- Course selection and college decisions
- Everybody getting sick
- Forgetting the X2 passwords and not being able to access report cards

GREASE TRAP - PAGE 1

ment facility to remove the oil and floating debris. The clean water that is left over enters the City of Lawrence sewer system."

Several venues have developed creative ways of disposing of the waste from their grease traps, and the grease from LHS may eventually be able to be used for other purposes. It is possible to turn yellow waste grease traps into biodiesel, which is a form of renewable fuel. Brown grease, the type of grease that the school produces, however, is much harder to recycle into biodiesel.

"Northeast is currently working to refine the grease to a point where it can be used to make Number 6 Biodiesel," said Cody.

Recycling fryer grease is part of the movement to "go green" and so far has a strong and energetic following.

Prices for biodiesel made from grease range from about $400 per metric ton to about $1,400 per metric ton, so the grease could represent a future source of revenue for the town if processing techniques can be improved.

CAREER - PAGE 3

dents to different rooms," said Stephanie Michael, another guidance counselor who organized Career Day.

Oliver Bentham, a sophomore, thought the overall experience was worth it.

"It was really interesting to hear the different stories from all the speakers and find out how they found their current jobs and what they like about them," she said. "It gave us something to think about, too."

SHOT PUT - PAGE 8

er launches the shot put up at a 45-degree angle. It is important to avoid stepping over the stop board, as this will result in a foul and the throw will not count.

Although the shot putters on the team make it all look easy, I can assure you that it's really quite tough.

I write this article to educate the masses about the level of diversity on the track team: contrary to popular belief, track is not just for people who like to run all day. It is also for people who like to jump over things, throw things, walk in circles and talk while doing it. Shot put may not be your calling (or mine), but it certainly can help you gain an appreciation for the variety of talents which the track team encompasses.

BLOGS - PAGE 4

Like Mitton, she uses her blog as a classroom tool, regularly posting class assignments to keep her students informed.

However, outside of school, Bean keeps another blog, "Bean Doodling," to display her personal artwork. She created it two years ago on Blogger, a platform run by Google, updating it with original artwork for her audience to enjoy.

"I just started to notice that a lot of artists had blogs, and it's wonderful to see the process of artists and how they create things [from] a 'behind the scenes' perspective," said Bean. "I never knew those things when I was a teenager, so it is cool to have that now. Blogs make artists more interesting and real, and you can actually comment on their stuff and they'll answer you."

Bean enjoys the interaction she can achieve through conversations with other blogging artists.

"I've had a positive experience as a blogger," said Bean. "I know that I got more into comic book art and independent artists because of blogs, [and] I've actually made friends with some of those people as a result of writing to them, which kind of amazes me."

Others use blogs and social media solely for entertainment.

Alice Tan, a sophomore, manages a personal blog on Tumblr and an account on Twitter to keep up with the celebrities she admires. She spends anywhere from 10 minutes to several hours a day on Tumblr, browsing photos and humorous posts from others while sharing her own.

"It's exciting when someone tells you they enjoy your blog, but ultimately I just do it because its fun," said Tan. "Whenever I'm not feeling the greatest I can go [to] my favorite blogs and I'll immediately feel better."

TUTORING - PAGE 3

pate in the project and would strongly recommend it. Although tutors are not required to go every week, they are encouraged to do so because of the unbalanced proportion of middle schoolers to tutors.

"If NHS students are looking for a relatively easy project that is both rewarding and time flexible, this is definitely it," Wilson said.

Clarke tutoring sessions are on Wednesdays, and Diamond tutoring sessions are on Tuesdays and Thursdays. All sessions last one hour.

COLLEGE - PAGE 5

tion about the school. They would describe the academic and athletic programs, extracurricular opportunities and residence options at the college.

Then, we would break up into smaller groups and go on a walking tour of the campus. At all of the schools that I visited, the tour guides were friendly students, usually juniors or seniors, and they were very knowledgeable about their school.

During the tours, the guides all walked backwards, facing the group (which apparently is common on college tours). Although this was fun to watch, they often narrowly avoided falling over curbs and bumps in the sidewalk, which became a distraction.

Before I went on any school visits, I was convinced that they were unnecessary given the volume of information that is available online. However, as my parents and I went around campuses, I was often quite surprised at how many interesting parts of a school there are that a website just can't convey.

One school that came across as primarily urban on the Internet actually had a number of quiet and secluded gardens and courtyards. Another school, which seemed huge online, was in reality quite small.

An aspect of the college tours that I found especially helpful was seeing the dorms. Before my first visit, I didn't know what to expect of the living quarters. After visiting a number of schools, however, I had a much better idea of just how small dorms are.

Overall, I found that visiting colleges gave me a more visceral feeling of what each school is like. It gave me a chance to ask questions of current students and ultimately helped me to decide what exactly I was looking for in a college.

THANK YOU

to our generous donors for supporting the Musket. We couldn't do it without you!

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YOUTH - PAGE 5

ple out there that lived in such poor conditions."

Like HYG, First Parish worked to build and improve houses in the area. The group also learned about the history and culture of Appalachia during the trip.

The First Parish group is not doing a trip this spring, but plan to return to West Virginia in 2013 and in the years after.

Each April vacation, the youth group from Follen Unitarian Universalist Church makes a trip to New Orleans. There, members of FUUY help victims of Hurricane Katrina by repairing and rebuilding their houses.

Last year, the work students did allowed a couple displaced by Hurricane Katrina to get back into their house months earlier than expected. The students, who stayed at a local church, woke up early each morning and worked alongside adults from the Follen community.

In addition to improving the lives of people in the New Orleans community, the students also gain new insight into the value of their work.

"When you build a table instead of buying one, you extend a little bit of your humanity in it," said Jesse Puka-Beals, a junior and a member of FUUY. "Having part of you in the house [that you built] also makes it easier to feel connected to the people you helped."

The work these youth group members perform and the lessons that they take away from their experiences compel them to continue helping others year after year.

"When you go down to a place where something bad has happened, the people don't necessarily just want your help, but they want to know that you'll stand by them through everything," said Puka-Beals.

CORRECTION: On the last issue's front page, the photo accompanying the Holocaust speaker article was incorrectly credited. The actual source was the organization Facing History and Ourselves. In the cheerleading article, part of another article was mistakenly inserted at the end.

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2011 - 2012

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Offbeat Athlete: Zitkovsky dives to victory

■ Anisa Haque
Staff Writer

There is a misconception that accomplished athletes start out in their respective sports as toddlers. For Helen Zitkovsky, a diver, this was not the case: She participated in competitive gymnastics for years before switching over to diving.

"Gymnastics was too intense," she said, "so a lot of gymnasts start diving."

Zitkovsky made the switch in the fourth grade, along with synchronized swimming. This year, as a senior, she was co-captain of the Lexington High School swim and dive team, and as the only diver, she carried her team to victory in the diving portion of many swim meets.

> "Helen definitely works hard and the team was always proud to have her do so well at meets."
> Jenna Grady, Senior

However, Zitkovsky did not always dive for LHS.

"When Helen joined the team in freshman year, she wasn't allowed to dive," Jenna Grady, also a senior on the team, wrote in an email.

"She practiced with us every day so she could compete as a swimmer in our meets. We were all so excited when she got to dive for the team because she's an amazing diver."

Caroline Berger, a freshman on the team, described Zitkovsky as a "hardworking, dedicated person, who gets stuff done when she puts her mind to it."

Zitkovsky admits that "learning a new dive" can be "definitely scary." Throughout her years on the team, however, she has proved to her teammates that she is serious about diving.

"Helen definitely works hard and the team was always proud to have her do so well at meets," said Grady.

During meets, Zitkovsky completes nine dives and nine rounds. For the majority of those meets, there are five judges who score her and the other divers. Moments before she dives, there is total silence, although she said that she has done so many competitions that she is used to it.

Zitkovsky frequently travels for diving, especially during the summer. In 2009, she had her most successful meet yet, which she still remembers to this day.

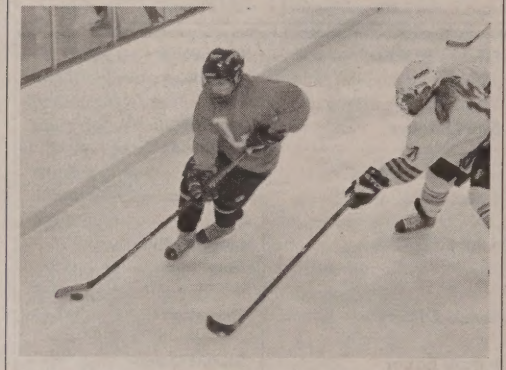
"I got placed sixth at [US Diving] Nationals [in Georgia], and it was a really good meet," said Zitkovsky.

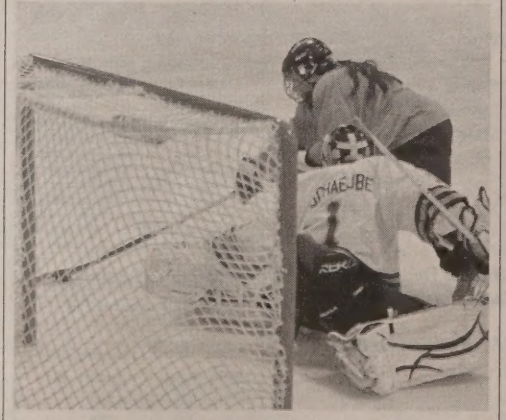
In the summer of 2010, she placed second at the Amateur Athletic Union Nationals and last summer she placed fifth. Even with her travels, though, she manages to keep up with school.

This is her last year at LHS, but there is still diving in her future; Zitkovsky will be diving for Princeton University next year.

Photo courtesy of Joe Costello, Image editing by Greg Hines

Senior Helen Zitkovsky (right) performs a vertical dive during a regional competition.





Photos courtesy of Sara Lehman

PINK THE RINK -- Members of the LHS girls varsity hockey team participated in Pink the Rink on Feb. 11, at the Hayden Recreation Centre. The game, played against Arlington High School, was to raise money for Breast Cancer Awareness. The Lexington team won the game with a score of 3-2.

Skaters balance school and competitions abroad

■ Ayesha Harisinghani
Sarah Zhang
Staff Writers

Most Lexington High School students find it hard enough to balance life in and out of school.

Add in hours of spins, falls and twirls, plus the opportunity to travel across the globe, and one will find the exciting yet rigorous double life of a LHS student and synchronized skater on the Haydenettes, Lexettes and Ice Mates.

"It is definitely a challenge," said Meghan Crocker, a Haydenette and a senior. "Some teachers are more flexible than others and some classes are easier to balance than others ... but I think that since I've been doing it for so long I have become accustomed to having good balance and having ... a great sense of time management."

As a Haydenette, Crocker and her teammates dedicate many hours to prepare for local and out-of-state competitions. Because of the packed competition schedule, skaters sometimes must miss school to compete. The result of their dedication could be seen last year, when the Haydenettes won first place in the national competition and went on to place third in the world competition, held in Finland.

Last year, the Lexettes represented the United States in a competition in Austria and won a bronze medal. The Ice Mates are the defending champions in the U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships at the novice level. The skaters enjoy competing, regardless of whether the location is five or 500 miles away.

"My favorite part of skating is performing in competitions," Jessica Zhu, a sophomore and an Ice Mate, wrote in an email. "The excitement of the huge stands and cheering crowd is really exhilarating."

Through long hours of practicing and traveling together, the skaters have formed a tight-knit community. The bonds among the members of each team are part of what makes synchronized skating worthwhile, in spite of all its challenges.

"I like to be with a group of girls that all have a common

[SKATING, page 6]

Sports Digest: Appreciation for shot put

■ Ali Boreiko
Columnist

I was introduced to shot put during track in the sixth grade, when the girls team needed shot putters.

You can only imagine the look on my teammates' faces when I, the scrawniest of little girls, leaped at the opportunity to try shot put. Back then, the shot — don't call it a ball or you'll be yelled at — was about the size of my head and weighed just about as much as I did.

I never threw much farther than the distance my arm extended over the line, nor did I ever score a single point, but I stuck with it throughout the whole season.

Now I run long distance on the girls' track team. While it is common for sprinters or middle distance runners to compete in both a field and running event on the track team, it is a rarity for long distance runners on our team. Being of a revolutionary mindset, I wanted to break free from the bonds of distance and compete in a field event as well. So I chose shot put.

As it turned out, I was at about the same level as I had been in middle school. The daily push-ups the track team does had been to no avail. Although I had grown since sixth grade, so had the shots. I worked with the indoor throwing coach for practice, but after my second throw, we both knew I was a lost cause.

Despite the elephant in the room, he kept on training me until I had to stop because of what I worried was turning into a serious thumb injury (but what was in fact just a little fatigue). It was a fun practice, but after that, I gave up on the shot put for good.

I'm far from being a shot put expert but I can say that I've learned something from my season and my one day of experience. The shot starts nestled underneath the jaw, resting on the thumb and forefinger. The thrower generally begins facing backwards or sideways with his or her weight on the back foot.

In one swift motion, the thrower must shift his or her weight to the front foot, twisting the feet and the core. While bringing the free arm tight into the body, the throw-

[SHOT PUT, page 7]